

## **The changing face of crime**

Twenty years ago the crimes that concerned most of us were burglary and theft, whether this be our homes, our vehicles, our bikes, or our mobile phones. But, in 2022, we (and the manufacturers) are now so much better at protecting these that this type of crime is much reduced. By carrying out simple and often cheap actions we can further reduce the risk considerably. Most home and car thefts are now targeted rather than opportunistic and we need to ensure we protect ourselves and not be seen to be a target.

So what stresses us? As residents in our homes, we have a right to a stress-free life and not to have to put up with criminal or unreasonable behaviour of others. Youths congregating at night in our local parks and recreation grounds not only disturb our peace but leave litter and broken glass behind. This makes parents keep their children from visiting those areas and doing what children do best – playing and enjoying themselves. Motorbikes tend to be noisy anyway, but modified silencers make them too noisy. Litter is everywhere, but so are waste bins. Why can't people put rubbish in the bins provided? We should not be expected to tolerate any of this. Report this to Woking BC, complain to your local councillor, contact the Police when the unacceptable behaviour is happening. Much of what happens is not a "crime", but it blights our lives and is wrong. Our Neighbourhood Policing team is based in Woking's council offices and they work with the council to address many of these issues. Together they can, and do, come up with long-term solutions. The Public Space Protection Order in Woking town centre has made the town a better place for the public. The canal is a far safer place to walk down than it was a few years ago. Local initiatives by the Police are making them more visible to the public (something we all think should be improved) and they are actually talking to us and asking us what causes us grief. The Police cannot be everywhere at the same time but they are getting better at talking to the public and asking what keeps us awake at night.

But the Police, Woking BC and Surrey CC are not psychic. They cannot be expected to know about local issues if we do not tell them. This is where the Neighbourhood Watch war-cry comes in – "Report, report, report". If you don't report it, the Police/council will not know about it. The more people who report an individual 'issue' the more likely it is going to be addressed. The Police are also getting very good at using our reports as intelligence to build up a case against the root of the crime or issue rather than just keep reacting to a constant set of individual reports. Most local problems are created by very few individuals, but the Police must have the evidence before they can confidently prosecute. Remember; "Report, report, report". 999/101, [www.surrey.police.uk/ro/report/](http://www.surrey.police.uk/ro/report/) [www.woking.gov.uk/report-it](http://www.woking.gov.uk/report-it).